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Uranium Loss Brought No Security Changes in Decade, Report Says

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 24 — Two international atomic energy agencies have made no substantive changes in their security procedures during the decade since they learned that Israel almost certainly had diverted 200 tons of uranium ore from a freighter headed for Italy, according to a Government report made public today.

The previously secret report was prepared by the Energy Research and Development Administration, now the Department of Energy, in 1976.

The lack of changes in international procedures following the 1968 discovery of the missing uranium was described in the previously secret report to Congress and in other documents made public today by the Natural Resources Defense Council. The Council, a private environmental group generally opposed to the development of nuclear energy, obtained the documents by using the Freedom of Information Act.

Also included in the response to the Council's request were documents showing that the United States Atomic Energy Commission was formally advised of the loss of the uranium in December 1969, a little more than a year after it occurred.

but that intelligence experts, presumably the Central Intelligence Agency, knew about it somewhat earlier.

The reported diversion of the uranium ore by Israel in November 1968 was a closely guarded secret among international atomic energy officials until April 1977 when it was first publicly disclosed at a conference in Austria. Although documentary proof does not exist, American and European intelligence officials subsequently have said they were convinced the shipment found its way to Israel, which since 1963 has had a reactor capable of creating the raw material used to make nuclear weapons. The Israeli Government has denied any involvement in the disappearance of the ore.

In an entirely different operation, a number of documents have been made public in the last two years that indicate that top officials in the C.I.A. and some other agencies are convinced Israel also illegally obtained highly enriched uranium from a privately owned nuclear facility in Apollo, Pa., sometime in the mid-1960's. This incident is still being investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Israel has denied the allegations.

The report by the Energy Research and Development Administration on the

uranium ore taken from the freighter was prepared at the request of the House subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs. The then-secret report was dated Feb. 5, 1976.

The subcommittee asked what the United States and the European Atomic Energy Community, known as Euratom, had done to improve security.

What the U.S. Did

"The United States action was limited to expressing to Euratom strong concern and to urging that corrective measures be taken to apply appropriate penalties against the violators," the report said.

Euratom, the report said, limited itself to examining possible legal recourses, reviewing regulations and requesting additional technical studies.

A second report, made to the United States Atomic Energy Commission on Dec. 11, 1969, said it was desirable that all nations belonging to the International Atomic Energy Agency be informed of the incident because additional precautions were indicated.

Because the physical security of potentially dangerous amounts of nuclear materials is considered a matter of national sovereignty, international organizations such as Euratom and the international agency have little power in an incident such as the disappearance of the uranium from the freighter.

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